

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SS-15 SSO-00 SP-02

PM-04 L-03 INR-07 INRE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

OMB-01 /060 W

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O R 171445Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2801

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

SECDEF WASHDC

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 1107

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, AC

SUBJECT: NEGOTIATIONS FOR US MILITARY FACILITIES: PARTIAL
AGREEMENT WITH ANTIGUA

REF BRIDGETOWN 1047

SUMMARY: GOA AND US NEGOTIATORS AGREED IN WRITING MAY 16
THAT US CAN CONTINUE TO USE ITS ANTIGUA MILITARY FACILI-
TIES FOR ANOTHER 11 YEARS (1978-1988) UNDER THE SAME FA-
VORABLE TERMS AS THE 1961 AGREEMENT. HOWEVER, PREMIER
BIRD DID NOT ACKNOWLEDGE HIS MAY 11 PRIVATE COMMITMENT
ON COMPENSATION (REFTEL), AND THAT KEY ISSUE IS LEFT FOR
JUNE OR JULY TALKS IN WASHINGTON. WE BELIEVE AGREEMENT CAN
BE REACHED AT THAT TIME ON THE BASIS OF OUR MAXIMUM ANNUAL
RENTAL OFFER OF \$1.3 MILLION. END SUMMARY.

1. ANTIGUA PREMIER VERE BIRD AND US NEGOTIATING TEAM
LEADER HEAVNER MAY 16 SIGNED PARTIAL AGREEMENT ON
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FUTURE OF US MILITARY FACILITIES IN ANTIGUA (TEXT
FOLLOWS SEPTTEL.) THIS PARTIAL AGREEMENT WAS OFFERED
AND SIGNED AFTER GOA TEAM HAD REJECTED DRAFT OF A FULL,
FINAL AGREEMENT, ON GROUNDS THE PROPOSED \$1.3 MILLION ANNUAL
RENTAL FEE DOES NOT ADEQUATELY REFLECT THE MILITARY IMPORT-
ANCE OF THE FACILITIES TO THE US.

2. BIRD DID NOT INTERVENE WHEN HIS MINISTERS REJECTED THE PROPOSED FULL AGREEMENT, AND ASIDE FROM SOME OBVIOUS SIGNS OF EMBARRASSMENT, HE DID NOT ACKNOWLEDGE HIS MAY 11 PRIVATE, ORAL AGREEMENT TO THE \$1.3 MILLION RENTAL FIGURE. HE SAID REPEATEDLY, HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS NO QUESTION OF A CONTINUED US MILITARY PRESENCE IN ANTIGUA, IMPLYING RATER DIRECTLY THAT HE WILL ULTIMATELY ACCEPT WHATEVER THE US OFFERS. BIRD OBSERVED THAT THIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON IS "TO SEE IF THERE IS A LITTLE BIT MORE," NOT TO CAST ANY DOUBT ON ANTIGUAN WILLINGNESS TO ACCOMMODATE THE US.

3. BIRD'S PULL BACK FROM HIS ORAL COMMITMENT IS NOT UNEXPECTED IN LIGHT OF EVIDENT PRESSURES FROM HIS MINISTERS, INCLUDING HIS SON, DEPUTY PREMIER LESTER BIRD, TO HOLD OUT FOR MORE. HOWEVER, A NEW AND POSSIBLY QUITE IMPORTANT FACTOR IS AN APPARENT DETAILED EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND INFORMATION BETWEEN THE GOA AND BARBADOS SOMETIME DURING THE PERIOD MAY 11-16.

EVIDENCE OF SUCH EXCHANGES APPEARED IN NEW, DETAILED MAY 16 ARGUMENTATION FROM BIRD'S MINISTER'S WHICH PARALLELED ALMOST EXACTLY THE POSITION TAKEN BY THE BARBADIAN NEGOTIATORS. THIS POSITION INCLUDED DETAILED ALLEGATIONS OF US 1961 COMMITMENTS TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AS PART OF THE 1961 AGREEMENT. CLEAREST EVIDENCE OF GOA/GOB EXCHANGE WAS GOA USE OF FIGURE ON BARBADOS FACILITY RECENTLY PROVIDED TO GOB BY US NAVAL PERSONNEL. WHEN HEAVNER QUERIED SOURCE OF FIGURE, GOA NEGOTIATORS VIRTUALLY ADMITTED THEY HAD IT FROM GOB.

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4. BEFORE SIGNING PARTIAL AGREEMENT, HEAVNER "WITHDREW" OFFER OF \$1.3 MILLION, SINCE IT WAS EXTENDED WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT IT WOULD BE ACCEPTED AND FULL AGREEMENT ACHIEVED. THUS, OFFICIAL HIGHEST US OFFER IS STILL \$1 MILLION. (HOWEVER, THE \$1.3 MILLION OFFER IS NOW KNOWN TO ALL GOA MINISTERS, AND IT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE THEIR STARTING POINT IN NEXT ROUND OF TALKS.)

5. COMMENT: (A) BELIEVE WE CAN GET FULL AGREEMENT ON OUR TERMS, INCLUDING COMPENSATION OF NO MORE THAN \$1.3 MILLION IN ANNUAL RENTAL. HOWEVER, UPCOMING WASHINGTON TALKS WILL REQUIRE FIRMNESS AND PATIENCE ON OUR PART, AND MUCH WILL DEPEND ON BIRD'S CONTROL OVER HIS OWN MINISTERS. WE WILL WANT TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO STRENGTHEN HIS HAND WHILE HOLDING FAST ON OUR POSITION.

(B) BARBADIAN MINISTER FORDE'S TOUGH TACTICS AND ADVICE TO THE GOA MAY AGAIN COMPLICATE OUR TALKS. IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, WE SHOULD COMPLETE OUR AGREEMENT

WITH ANTIGUA BEFORE RETURNING TO ENGAGE BARBADOS.
(C) WHEN IN WASHINGTON, BIRD AND HIS MINISTERS WILL
EXPECT TO TALK ABOUT ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, IF NOT DIRECTLY
IN THE DISCUSSION ON THE FACILITIES AT LEAST IN SEPARATE
MEETINGS BEFORE, AFTER, OR DURING THE MILITARY TALKS.
KEEPIN THE ISSUES SEPARATE WILL BE DIFFICULT - AND IM-
PORTANT, BOTH FOR OUR CREDIBILITY AND FOR THE PRECEDENT
SET FOR OTHER CARIBBEAN MILITARY NEGOTTIATIONS. ANTIGUA HAS
A VERY GOOD CASE FOR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, AND WE BELIEVE
IT IMPORTANT TO LISTEN TO AND CAREFULLY CONSIDER THEIR
NEEDS WHEN BIRD COMES TO WASHINGTON. AT THE SAME TIME,
WE ANTICIPATE THE ISSUE OF "LINKAGE" (BETWEEN US MILITARY
REQUIREMENTS AND US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE) WILL SHORTLY
CONFRONT US AGAIN IN ANTICIPATED NEGOTIATIONS WITH BARBADOS,
THE BAHAMAS, AND THE UK (FOR OUR FACILITIES ON GRAND TURK).SIMMS

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